



Bosnia UPDATE

A Summary of Developments Affecting the Balkans and the Deployment of U.S. Armed Forces by the Staff of the Committee on National Security.

Lloyd Spence, Chairman

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Quotes of the Week:

"Privately, everybody agrees that there will have to be a military presence beyond December, and it will have to be under NATO."

--Unidentified NATO diplomat,
6/11/96

"It would be my recommendation that the United States participate..."

--Secretary of Defense Perry,
6/12/96

"Our troops will conduct more visible and proactive patrols throughout the country....This will improve conditions for freedom of movement and put war criminals at greater risk of apprehension."

--Secretary of State Warren
Christopher, 6/3/96

"If Americans became involved in the arrest of war criminals, you become a partisan, and that isn't going to work."

--Anonymous Pentagon official,
6/4/96

"I will not see my soldiers put at risk unnecessarily, and we are put at risk if we arrest some of these characters, even under the best of conditions."

--American commander in
Bosnia, 6/4/96

"We're not anywhere near where we would like to be. We're further than where we thought we would be in some areas, and not as far along, but on balance, frankly we should be further."

--Admiral Leighton Smith, NATO
Commander in Bosnia, 6/7/96

In Bosnia and the Balkans:

NATO officials reportedly reach an unofficial consensus that a NATO military presence will be required in Bosnia after the one-year IFOR mission expires. A NATO diplomat says, "There is subtle but substantial pressure building among the European allies for the Americans to stay." IFOR ground troops commander General Michael Walker says, "I suspect there is going to have to be something around to show that the international community is still determined to prevent the war from breaking out again." Secretary of Defense Perry says that if NATO decides to stay in Bosnia, "it would be my recommendation that the United States participate.... It is not clear ground troops would be part of the decision. But if ground troops are part of the decision, then I would think the U.S. would want to participate in it." White House spokesman Michael McCurry says Secretary Perry "was just speculating" and states, "There has been no change in the President's view of the current IFOR mission. It will last about a year."

James Pardew, coordinator of the "arm and train" effort, meets with Bosnian and Croatian leaders in an effort to resolve disputes that jeopardize implementation of the arm and train effort. He notes,

"The security of the people of Bosnia is at stake here and time is running out."

Portuguese IFOR troops reportedly confront Bosnian Serb forces conducting a training exercise near the headquarters of Bosnian Serb military commander Ratko Mladic in Han Pijesak. Initial reports that U.S. forces had been involved in a confrontation with Mladic and his troops are denied.

IFOR commander Admiral Leighton Smith rules out any move to capture indicted Bosnian Serb war criminal Radovan Karadzic. However, expanded patrols are reportedly ordered around the Bosnian Serbs' main stronghold. Admiral Smith also notes that U.S. forces will remain in Bosnia after December 20th. He also states that there is "zero" political will among the parties to move toward reconciliation and declares his disappointment with the implementation of the peace agreement.

OSCE Chairman Flavio Cotti says scheduled elections should not take place if conditions are not favorable. He says, "If even minimal conditions are not met, then I believe it will be better to delay elections. If these elections degenerate into a farce and a drama, then it will be a negative exercise for all of the parties involved."

UN High Representative for Bosnia

Carl Bildt argues that a delay in holding elections would make it increasingly difficult to ensure the success of the peace process. He notes that it would “delay the setting up of the common institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina that are the core of the efforts to overcome the country’s partition of the country.”

OSCE officials report they are under “intense pressure” from the United States to certify that Bosnian elections can proceed as scheduled. However, the latest OSCE internal situation report states that “the human rights situation showed no improvement this week, with obstruction of freedom of movement and threats against minorities persisting.” The report also concludes that Bosnian Serb leaders are not complying with the peace agreement’s terms for elections, and are hardening their positions.

UN war crimes investigators discover additional bodies in a mass grave at Nova Kasba, about 12 miles northwest of Srebrenica. To date, UN war crimes investigators have identified and indicted 58 suspected war criminals, including 47 Serbs, eight Croats and three Muslims.

In Washington:

The Department of Defense announces that Admiral Smith will be succeeded by Vice Admiral T. Joseph Lopez.

State and Defense department spokesmen maintain that expanded patrols of U.S. armed forces in Bosnia do not mark a fundamental shift in U.S. policy.

Former Director of Central Intelligence James Woolsey testifies that he was “kept out of the loop” by the National Security Council and State Department regarding the transfer of Iranian

arms to Bosnia through Croatia. He criticizes the Administration’s support of the operation, but declares that it was not illegal.

Bosnian U.N. Ambassador Muhamed Sacirbey criticizes U.S. peacekeepers in Bosnia, calling them “well-dressed tourists.” He also notes that “the necessary conditions for... elections certainly do not exist today in much of the country, particularly Republika Srpska.”

In Florence:

Representatives of the parties involved in implementing the Dayton peace accord meet to assess progress over the past six months and to discuss what to expect over the next six months as the IFOR mission winds down.

After extended negotiations, the parties to the Dayton accord sign an arms control agreement providing for weapons elimination, exchanges of military information, and on-site inspections.

In The Hague:

Drazen Erdemovic, a Croat who fought for the Bosnian Serb army, pleads guilty to charges of crimes against humanity for participating in the killing of thousands of Muslim men at a United Nations designated “safe area” in Bosnia last July.

The Bosnian government extradicts 2 Muslims to the War Crimes Tribunal.

In Vienna:

U.S. diplomat Robert Frowick, the head of the Bosnian OSCE mission, reportedly directs OSCE staff to downplay human rights abuses in their reporting prior to the scheduled elections. He also states that only a major escalation of conflict could postpone the elections.

Compliance Watch:

Six U.S. soldiers, seeking to confiscate illegal weapons, are extricated by French troops after being surrounded by an angry mob of approximately 100 Bosnian Serbs near Sarajevo. The French troops assist the Americans without having to employ force. This is the first time that Bosnian Serb civilians have blocked an American patrol in the area since the signing of the Dayton accord.

U.N. refugee spokesman Kris Janowski charges the Bosnian Serbs with violations of the Dayton accord. He says, “Their commitment to freedom of movement is zero, or somewhere around that, which they have proven many times on many occasions recently.”

International monitors report that Muslims in Sarajevo have taken over the homes of approximately 30,000 Serbs and Croats forced to leave during the war, in violation of the Dayton accord. Ethnic cleansing reportedly continues in Teslic, in northern Bosnia, as Muslims are beaten and chased from their homes by gangs of Serbian refugees seeking to take over their land. United Nations officials estimate that about 100 Muslims have recently been forced from the area.

Croatia arrests a Bosnian Croat charged with war crimes, but reportedly allows Dario Kordic, the most senior Croat indicted for war crimes, to travel freely between Zagreb and Bosnia.

Bosnian Serb authorities cease the bus service linking Banja Luka with Zenica that is operated under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Previous issues and additional background information on any of the items in this UPDATE may be obtained from Tom Donnelly (x65372), David Trachtenberg (x60532), Will Marsh (x56045) on the staff of the House National Security Committee.